mantris sit. This durbar must not be confused with the electoral durbar which will be referred to later. It is an executive council over which the Siem presides, and also possesses judicial powers (for a description of a judicial durbar, see page 91 of the monograph). The form of summons to appear before this durbar used to be a knotted piece of string or cane, the number of knots denoting the degrees of urgency of the summons, not a piece of pork, as one writer has said. Pork is a luxury which is not usually distributed gratis. The Siem manages the State business through his *mantris*, although it is true that in some States the members of the Siem family have been allowed a considerable share of the State management. This latter arrangement is, however, a departure from the ordinary rule in the Siemships, and is regarded as unconstitutional. In some States there are village headmen, styled Sirdars, who settle cases, collect labour, and assess and receive for the chief the *pynsuk*, which may be literally translated as "gratification." In Nongstoin there is an official styled *lyngskor*, who is the superior of a number of village sirdars, and who acts as the Siem's deputy-governor. In the Khasi Hills there is no land revenue, nor are there any tithes or other imposts levied upon the cultivator's produce. The land, to a great extent, is the property of the different clans and villages, although in some instances there are estates owned by private persons. The chief is entitled to receive the income that arises from what are known as the *raj* or State lands only. All that the Siem usually receives from his people in the way of direct revenue is the State subscription, or *pynsuk*, mentioned above. Even this is supposed to be a voluntary contribution, and it is not demanded in some States. This tax is nominally a collection to meet the expenses of the State ceremonies, but is really a means of increasing the chief's private income. The contribution varies in amount according to the means of the villagers. The Siem's principal source of income, however, in all the Khasi States is the toll (*khrong*), which he takes from those who sell at the markets in his territory. As the Khasis are great traders these tolls are often at the larger markets fairly valuable. The chief raises no excise revenue, the manufacture of both fermented and distilled

I: Gurdon E-4,5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

certain dominant but non-priestly clans (*mantrís*). In other States the Council has been widened by the addition to it of village headmen (*ai dawa*), or the chief superintendents (*basans*) of the village markets, tolls from which constitute the chief item in the public receipts of these States. A further step towards the recognition of the public will in the nomination of a Siem has been the introduction of popular elections, at which all the adult males vote. Such popular elections were very greatly due to the views held by Colonel Bivar, who was Deputy-Commissioner of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills from 1865 to 1877. These elections have been, in many States, an innovation which is hardly in accord with public sentiment, and in many cases the voters have done no more than confirm the selection of a special electoral body. It is, however, clear that the idea of popular elections is not one with which the people are unfamiliar, e.g. in Langrin State, where all the adult males customarily vote at the election of a Siem. Popular election has also been customary in the Nobosohpoh and Bhowal States, in cases where a special electoral body has been unable to agree upon a nomination, and also in Nongspung, if a Council of five *lyngdohs*, which has in this State authority to declare who is the rightful heir, but not to disqualify him, cannot come to an unanimous decision. The Siems are appointed by an assembly, or *durbar*, which will be described later. The chiefs, having been thus chosen by the *durbar*, which is supposed by the people to be an institution of Divine origin, are styled, *ki Siem u Blei*, or Siems of God. In most States the Siem is the religious as well as the secular head, e.g. in the Cherra State, where the Siem is also *lyngdoh*. In Khyrim State the Siem has sacerdotal duties to perform at different religious ceremonies, especially at the time of the annual Nongkrem dance. It is the custom for the Siem to consult the auspices with the soothsayers for the good of the State. The Siem in matters judicial acts as a judge, the whole body of the *durbar* being the jury. In olden days the Siem marched to war at the head of his army. It is not customary to recognise an heir-apparent, and the young men of the Siem family pursue the ordinary avocations of a Khasi, not comporting themselves in the least like scions of royalty. In quite

[1] Gurdon checks the Siem -- Analysis

1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

693 Sunlong Dorjepon, of the place at the foot of the Garo Hills in
723 the Mymensing district, may be a corruption of the former.
The Siems are supposed to be descended from a stag, possibly a
631 relic of totemism in this family. In this State there is a large
632 electoral darbar consisting of 2 *mantris*, 21 *lyngdohs*, 25
sirdars, 1 *lyngdoh*, and 1 *basan*. The *lyngdohs* are the
heads of the priestly class, by whom they are chosen. The
sirdars of villages are appointed by the Siem in conjunction
with the adult males of the different villages. There are two
lyngdohs and two *basans* in the State, but one *lyngdoh* and one
basan only at present are members of the darbar which
[639] constitutes the Siem. A *lyngdoh* is the Siem's agent for the
purpose of governing a collection of villages. He is appointed
693 by the Siem with the consent of the adult males of the villages
[illegible] Khadsawphra, is believed to have been founded by a Synteng
of the name of U Shajer, who left the Jowai hills with his
sister, Ka Shaphlang, because she had failed to obtain her share
of the family property in Jaintia. This man is said to have
purchased certain lands in Nardwar in Kamrup. Apparently
he did not obtain possession of this estate, for he came up into
the Khasi Hills, and finding there certain villages without a
ruler, he, at the wish of the *lyngdohs* of these villages, con-
solidated them into a state over which he ruled as a Siem. He
was succeeded by his sister's son, U Syntiew, who further
extended his territories until he obtained possession of other
villages. U Syntiew is said to have delegated a portion of his
powers to his two sisters, Ka Jem and Ka Sangkar, who ruled
at Nobling and Nongkhlaw respectively, succeeding rulers
[726] further extended the Nongkhlaw territory. In 1829, U Tirot
Singh rebelled against the East India Company and carried on
for four years a successful guerilla warfare. He was finally
captured and was imprisoned for life by the British Govern-
673 ment. According to the statement of Raja Kine Singh, it would
681 seem that formerly the heads of five clans had the right to appoint
[640] the Siem, i.e. the heads of 3 *lyngdoh* clans and of the Jaid
Lyngkot and Mawphlang clans. In the Cherra State the electors
are the male adults of the State, who are represented on the
Siem's darbar by the members of the 12 aristocratic clans, known
as the Shadar Sirdars, and certain representative chiefs.

[illegible] the Mawphlang State ... Ed.]

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an appeal to the people. Mention has been made above of States over which *lyngdohs* possess temporal as well as spiritual powers. The States of Sohiong, Mawphlang, and Lyniong may be quoted as examples. Here the *lyngdoh* is elected from the *lyngdoh* clan by all the adult males of the state. Some small States, such as Maoloh and Pomsanngut, are presided over by Sirdars, a name which has probably been introduced during the British era of supremacy in these hills. The Sirdar is elected by the adult males of the State. In Mawlong there are a Sirdar, a *lyngdoh*, and a *doloi* who govern the State. These two latter officials are elected by the people as in the case of Sirdars. In the Shella Confederacy there are four officials who are styled *Wahadadars*, the name being probably a corruption of the Persian *'ahda-dar*.* These officials are elected for periods of three years each by the people.

The Jaintia Hills, which are British territory, are divided up into twenty dolloships, the dolloship being an office elected by the people, the Government reserving the right of approval or the reverse to the doloi's appointment. The doloia, under the rules for the administration of justice in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, as well as the Sirdars of the British villages in the Khasi Hills, possess certain judicial powers. They are assisted by officials known as *putors*, *basans*, and *sangots* in the performance of their duties. This administration, on the whole, works well, and its success shows the wisdom of the Government in having made use of the indigenous agency it found to hand when the Jaintia territory was annexed. In the Jaintia Hills there are also three Sirdarships, the office being filled by election as in the case of doloia.

In conclusion it should be stated that it has been attempted here to give but a brief *résumé* of the Khasi political system as it exists at the present time. The above account of the procedure at elections is based on existing usage. The procedure should not, however, be regarded as stereotyped, for it will no doubt be open to such revision as may on occasion be suggested by the legitimate evolution of tribal customs.

* Obsolete.

1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

423 prominent trees on the boundary lines, or by natural boundaries such as streams.

423 614 In the Wár country to the West of Cherra, notably the country between the heights of Laitkynsew and the plains, considerable portions of the hill-sides are the property of communities known as *sengs*. A *seng* may be defined as a collection of families sprung from some common ancestress or ancestor. As an instance of these *sengs* I may describe the community known as the *lai seng* which owns land in the neighbourhood of Laitkynsew, the area owned being known as the "*ri lai seng*," or land of the three clans. These clans are descended from three men, U Kynta, U Nabein, and U Tangrai, it being remarkable that in this case descent is traced originally from male ancestors and not from females. The three ancestors are said to have owned a large tract of land, and they had as their abode the village of Laitmawria close to Laitkynsew; but owing to an epidemic, or some such cause, they deserted the village of Laitmawria and went with their families to live in some of the surrounding Wár villages, viz. in Tyrna, Nongkroh, Nongwar, Mastoh, and Mawlong. The descendants of the three men above-mentioned possess a genealogical table, showing their descent from the original three founders of the *sengs*. They claim a large tract of country lying to the south and south-east of the Laitkynsew plateau, containing not only orange gardens, but also valuable lime quarries. There are other *seng* communities also in the neighbourhood, e.g. the *hiuriew phew seng*, or sixty *sengs*, who put forward claims to other tracts of land. The boundaries of the *ri lai seng* are identifiable on the ground. [622] The business of the *seng* community is managed by a durbar, an elder or other influential person being chosen as president.

423 [427] 692 In the country of the Lyngams the crop belongs to the person who cultivates it, but the land belongs to the *kur* or family. The Lyngam villages, like those in the Khasi Siemships, do not pay any rent to the Siem. If outsiders cultivate within the areas set apart for the different Lyngam villages, all of them, including women, have to pay eight annas each to the people of the village in whose circle they cultivate. There is usually a mutual understanding between inhabitants of Lyngam villages that certain tracts of land belong to the

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considering. Some of the leading characteristics of the Lynngams will now be detailed. The Lynngams are by complexion swarthy, with features of Mongolian type. The men are of middle height and the women remarkably short, both sexes being not nearly so robust as the Khasis, a result due probably to climatic influences, for the Lynngams live in fever-haunted jungles. The men have very little hair about the face, although a scanty moustache is sometimes seen, the hairs in the centre being carefully plucked out, the result being two tufts on either side. Beards are never seen. The women are ill-favoured, and wear very little clothing. The men wear the sleeveless coat of the Khasi and Mikir pattern, called *phong-marong*, which is made of cotton dyed red, blue, and white. This custom may have been borrowed from the Khasis. They do not grow their own cotton, but obtain it from the plains. They make their own dyes, *changlong* (red) and *hur sai-iong* (black). A cotton cloth, barely enough for purposes of decency, is tied between the legs, the ends being allowed to hang down in front and behind. Sometimes an apron is worn in front. At the present day the men wear knitted woollen caps, generally black or red, of the Nongstoin pattern (a sort of fisherman's cap), but the elderly men and head-men wear turbans. The females wear a cotton cloth about eighteen inches broad round the loins, sometimes striped red and blue, but more often only dark blue. A blue or red cloth is thrown loosely across the shoulders by unmarried girls, but married women only wear the waist-cloth, like the Garos. A cloth is tied round the head by married women, sometimes, Garo fashion. The women wear quantities of blue beads as necklaces, like their Garo sisters. They obtain the beads from the Garo markets at the foot of the hills. Brass ear-rings are worn by both sexes; the women, like the Garos, load their ears to such an extent with brass rings as to distend the lobes greatly. Silver armlets are worn by the head-men only, or by those who possess the means to give a great feast to the villagers. This is the custom of the Garo *nokmas*, or head-men. Both sexes wear bracelets. The men also wear necklaces of beads. The rich wear necklaces of cornelian and another stone which is thought by the Lynngams to be valuable. A necklace of such stones is called *u'pieng blei* (god's necklace).

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301 This stone is apparently some rough gem which may be picked up by the Lynngams in the river beds. A rich man amongst
556 them, however, is one who possesses a number of metal gongs,
534 which they call *wiang*. For these they pay very high prices,
436 Rs. 100 being quite a moderate sum for one of them. Being curious to see one of these gongs, I asked a *sirdar*, or head-man, to show me one. He replied that he would do so, but it would take time, as he always buried his gongs in the jungle for fear of thieves. Next morning
[531] he brought me a gong of bell metal, with carvings of animals engraved thereon. The gong when struck gave out a rich deep note like that of Burmese or Thibetan gongs. These gongs have a regular currency in this part of the hills, and represent to the Lynngams "Bank of England" notes. It would be interesting to try to ascertain what is their history, for no one in the Lynngam country makes them in these days. Is it possible that the Garos brought them with them when
534 they migrated from Thibet? The gongs are well known in the
● 622 Garo Hills, and I hear that when a *nokma*, or head-man, there
778 dies his corpse is laid out upon them. They thus possess also an element of sanctity, besides being valuable for what they will fetch to the Garos or Lynngams. We may hope to hear more about them in Captain Playfair's account of the Garos.

304 The Lynngams do not tattoo. Their weapons are the large-
411 headed Garo spear, the dao, and the shield. They do not usually
243 carry bows and arrows, although there are some who possess them. They are by occupation cultivators. They sow two kinds of hill rice, red and white, on the hill-sides. They have no wet paddy cultivation, and they do not cultivate in terraces like the Nagas. They burn the jungle about February, after cutting down some of the trees and clearing away some of the debris, and then sow the paddy broadcast, without cultivating the ground in any way. They also cultivate millet and Job's-tears in the same way. With the paddy chillies are sown the
241 first year. The egg plant, arum, ginger, turmeric, and sweet
231 potatoes of several varieties are grown by them in a similar
754 manner. Those that rear the lac insect plant *landoo* trees (Hindi *arhal dal*) in the forest clearings, and rear the insect thereon. Some of these people, however, are prohibited by a

3:Stegmiller-17 M-4,5(no date)1924 AR7Khasi AR7

793
622
292

Fig. 6 p. 18
[The village chief in his sacrificial coat and ornaments]

782 kingdom, thou hast given the sun and the moon,
796 for reckoning the year, so that we may have Pujs once in the year, so that kings may arise, the children of the valleys may increase and thrive, the children of the Khasi, the children of the Bhoi, the children of the War, so that the sacrificial gifts may increase before the face of thine altar." (11)

11. P. Dr. Becker, S.D.S., loc. cit., p. 902 (Anthropos).

782 At these state and community sacrifices, the
793 official lyngdohs are the chief one to appear,
622 who together with the ruling king or chieftain
796 and with other lyngdohs from the villages perform the sacrifices. These annual state sacrifices are introduced and performed with great ceremony. They take place in front of the house of the s' iem sad (high priestess) of the state involved. (Fig. 2) [Fig. 6. The village chief in his sacrificial coat and ornaments]*

782 In addition to the usual sacrificial gifts,
796 which are grouped together on a small altar of earth and which consist of a banana leaf, betel nut leaves, pepper leaves, betel nuts, kpu and rynsi, fermented rice water in a gourd bottle, and oak leaves, there are chiefly hens and goats and at the end a pig. Goats are slaughtered in great numbers, so that the chief festival day of the state sacrifice is called pom blang (the goat heads) by the people.

782 Besides the slaughtering of the sacrificial
535 animals, the dance plays a chief part. At these
796 great sacrifices all the dances that are customary among the Khasi are performed: the dance [219] of the unmarried girls, the dance of the girls and men together, but both sexes are so placed that the men form an outer circle and the girls

*[See category 116, p. 17--Analyst]

Ik Chattopadhyay E-4, 5 (no date) 1941 AR7 Khasi AR7

KHASI KINSHIP AND SOCIAL ORGANISATION

BY

PROF. K. P. CHATTOPADHYAY.

Introduction

In a paper on Khasi marriage rules Prof. Hodson has tried to explain the special features of the Khasi kinship terms and marriage rules on the hypothesis of a former dual division of Khasi Society, and certain new social forces which came into operation when the dual society broke up (1).

Hodson used for his work, the kinship terms noted in the Assam Census Report (2), Gurdon's work on Khasis (3) and a dictionary by U. Nissorsing. A full list of Khasi kinship terms was published by Rai Bahadur S. C. Roy shortly afterwards (4). The list is stated to have been compiled with the help of the ex- Siem of Cherra, on the genealogical method. The genealogies have not however been printed, and detailed notes are not available.

Recently the writer of this paper proceeded to the village of Mawphlang, the head-quarters of the Khasi State of this name and collected a certain amount of data to discuss this problem. The village is situated to the southwest of Shillong, at a distance of sixteen miles, and has preserved the old customs to a fair extent. It is ruled over by a lyngdoh or priest-chief, assisted by four myntris. At the time of the visit, the lyngdoh was away, suspended by the Political Agent for misgovernment, and the powers of the State were vested in the council of myntris. The senior myntri U Subu Rai, who is an old man

[this source has been processed for the AR7 Khasi file -- Analyst.]

Il: Chattopadhyay E-4, 5 (no date) 1941 AR7 Khasi AR7

nearly seventy years of age, spoke English a little, and kindly agreed to help by acting as introducer as well as interpreter. The Chowkidar of the bungalow, a Christian Khasi who spoke Hindi tolerably well was however our principal interpreter. Before proceeding to the village, I had studied Roberts' Khasi Grammar and also learnt simple sentences in Khasi necessary for collecting genealogies, kinship terms and connected details, like the inheritance of the ancestral house and lands. This portion of the data was collected entirely through questions and answers in Khasi; the other details were obtained with the help of myntri U Subu Rai and his friends and the Chowkidar, U Hudrington. On important points however, some checking was made, by simple questions in Khasi, which involved definite answers in the affirmative or negative. My students who had accompanied me for training in field studies, repeated some of my observations, in my presence and with my help and guidance.

My best thanks are due to Mr. K. Cantlie, Deputy Commissioner, Khasi and Jaintia Hills, for furnishing me with the letter of introduction to U Subu Rai and for other facilities. His published notes on Khasi law, especially the chapters on inheritance also proved to be of great value in carrying out the enquiries (5). In the subsequent portions of this article, references to the works of Gurdon and Cantlie, will be indicated merely by (G) and (CN) respectively.

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

APPENDIX

SOME ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM SHELLA AND JATINGA

Shella

Shella is situated on the lowest of the southern slopes of the Khasi Hills, bordering on the Sylhet plain of East Pakistan. For centuries the people of Shella maintained close trading connections with the people of the plain, so that they have been much influenced by the Hindu. They have been to some extent divorced economically and culturally from their own people who live in the uplands and on higher part of the slopes. Actually, this is a natural result of their geographical location. From Cherrapunjee, the southern edge of the upland Khasi Hills, only a narrow footpath goes down to Shella. The altitude of Cherrapunjee is about 5,000 feet and of Shella from 500 to 1,000 feet, and the distance between them is 8 miles. The path descends very steeply and is full of hard stones. This difficulty of communication is also why the Hindu influence did not penetrate the upland Khasi, as in the case of the Jaintia Hills.[1]

This area has a unique political organization which differs from the majority of Khasi states who are traditionally ruled by the members of the Siem clan. Shella is organized as a confederation, called 'Shella Confederacy,' and consists of four local villages. The head of the village is called *wadadhar*, and is elected by the villagers every three years. The number of households of the Shella Confederacy was about 900 in January 1956. The names of the four villages and their *wadadhar* in 1956 were:

Name of village	*Name of wadadhar*
1. Shella	Devish Mohan Roy
2. Mushtoh	Ditojou Roy
3. Nongtrai	Orju Roy
4. Tyngnger	Jabuni Roy

Each village is divided into sections. For instance, Shella village has nine sections: (1) Jasir, (2) Disong, (3) Duba, (4) Jamau, (5) Nongrum, (6) Nongnong,

1. However, Shella was the only way out and the main gateway from the Khasi Hills to the plain; it was here that the British first entered the Khasi Hills. They proceeded from Shella to Cherrapunjee and made the latter headquarters of the Khasi Hills in 1833.

clothing, operate the large Khasi business establishments in Shillong, and provide all civic and religious leadership. Women care for children and for the home, do the marketing, and sell dried fish, betel nut, lime, fruits, and rice breads at markets. Other tasks can be performed by either sex. **Land tenure.** Land was formerly divided into sib land and public domain. Sib land was corporately held in perpetuity, and was inalienable except by the unanimous consent of all members of the sib. The public domain was subject to usufructuary right by anyone who kept the land regularly under habitation or cultivation, with a lapse of no more than three years. Most villages grew up on public domain, and then reckoned all land inhabited or under cultivation by a village member as village land. Forests were public, except for sacred groves possessed by villages or lineage groups, and everyone was free to gather branches for fuel. Wastelands and streams were also public. By now, most public domain and village land, together with its forest cover, has been pre-empted as private property and is being rented and sold as such. Sib lands remain intact, unless the sibs agree to rent, lease, or sell. [Cf. Cantlie 1934.]

462 294 443 622 423 [78]

KIN GROUPS. **Descent.** Descent is matrilineal, and the Khasi is a member exclusively of his own matrilineage from birth to death. Adoption, which is very rare, is only within the matrilineage. **Kin groups.** The maximal matrilineage is the sib; this is a named, widely dispersed, strictly exogamous, lineage group, which claims but cannot trace its origin from a single ancestress. Sibs used to meet as corporate groups from time to time. Some sibs are linked with others in large amorphous groups that are unnamed and are defined solely by exogamy. Such a group is composed of two or more sibs, the ancestresses of which are claimed to have been either real sisters or dear friends who out of affection declared that thenceforth their descendants would be as consanguineals. The origin and function of sib-linkage is now unknown, and today the members of a sib will often disagree on whether or not their sib is linked with another. • The minimal matrilineage is the local descent group, or *iing*. This is the largest kin group that normally rallies at life crises. It is said that the *iing* formerly spanned six generations; today, it encompasses only four. If an *iing* grows to more than four generations in a single village, it segments. New houses are located at some distance from the old and the *iing* soon forgets exactly how to trace genealogical connection, except for which segment descended from a youngest sister. The term *iing* may also be applied to an extended family, an elementary family, and a house. The elementary family is the basic domestic unit in Khasi society. In any village there are likely to be one or two households which stand as sole local representatives of the lineage of the female household head. Such a household is known as an

611 [597] 614 602 [59]